

3. Parks and Recreation Summary of Findings

An evaluation of the current and projected park facility needs for Hollister are summarized as a basis for recommendations. The summary is based on several factors:

- Existing population and future population projections
- Inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities
- Interviews with city staff
- Input from the Project Task Force
- Community Questionnaire
- Hollister General Plan 1995–2010

GENERAL FINDINGS

Many residents take advantage of the varied recreation programs sponsored through the City. Success for the City's recreation programs are reflected in participation levels outpacing the growth rate of the City for both youth and adult sports. Hollister residents have expressed mixed concerns for the future of Hollister Park and Recreation System.

Based on community comments there is a strong desire to enhance the maintenance of existing facilities while moving forward with plans to expand recreation opportunities. Clearly, Hollister's program growth is exceeding facility development.

GROWTH

Based on population growth from 1980 to 2000, and a projected 2010 population of 42,118, Hollister is expected to grow at a greater pace over the next 10 years. This growing population is expected to bring even greater demands for park facilities and recreation services. Some of these services will be provided by private (for profit) businesses and local organizations. However, City based recreation services are anticipated to experience the greatest demand. The City will need to step up the acquisition and development of park facilities to keep pace with Hollister's growth.

PARK LAND DEFICIENCY

The Park Acreage Standards Summary indicates a current parkland deficit—23 to 50 acres—based on current City parkland standards.

With a projection of 42,118 by 2010, an additional 68 acres developed parkland will be required based on a goal of 3 acres of parkland per thousand population. Based on a 4 acre per thousand goal of 110 acres, additional parkland will be required.

Using the City' s park classification, 36.5 acres will be dedicated to seven neighborhood parks; 73.5 acres will be dedicated to two new community parks.

OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

The City' s General Plan identifies use of stream corridors and flood zones for linear parks or greenways. The community has considerable interest in trails and bikeways that can be integrated into these corridors. Currently, there are no such open space and trail facilities.

The San Benito River, Santa Anna Creek and their drainage corridor tributaries are within the City boundaries and could be utilized for trails, open space and linear parks.

Additional parkland acquisition could be associated with future neighborhood and community passive recreation, as well as open space. Additional river and drainage corridor lands may be acquired through grants, dedication or easements with a potential additional 100 acres of open space for trails and bikeways.

PARK DISTRIBUTION & ACCESS

The City has developed a variety of park types to serve community residents. Current park policy recommends neighborhood parks be located throughout the City within a 1/4 to 1/2-mile radius.

In the future, no parkland should be accepted for dedication unless additional land can be acquired at that location for a 5-acre minimum park. These new parks should be located to maximize accessibility to currently under served neighborhoods.

An evaluation of park facilities and locations indicates a lack of neighborhood park development in western and southern neighborhoods of Hollister. To provide parks in built-out neighborhoods, smaller parks have been developed with limited recreation facilities. These smaller parks become impacted by over use and require more ongoing intense maintenance efforts.

Less than 5-acre parks will only be allowed in developed areas of the City where acquisition of land is not feasible.

Currently, the City policy is to acquire land adjacent to elementary and middle schools for neighborhood parks. This has been an effective strategy for new neighborhood areas.

The City should continue to plan and develop neighborhood school parks in conjunction with new schools.

For community parks and neighborhoods where no new schools are planned, the City will need to acquire and develop additional parkland. The availability of appropriate size parcels at reasonable costs is limited.

The identification and acquisition of future park sites should be the highest priority over the next 5 years.

RECREATION PROGRAM



DEMANDS

The City provides a wide range of indoor recreation programs. Where possible, the City coordinates with individuals and private organizations to sponsor additional cultural arts, day care and senior programs utilizing the City's Community Center. The Community Center is open every weekday and available evenings and weekends by reservation. Meeting and activity rooms are not available for limited organized sport activities.

To meet growing demands, the City should continue to work with individuals, private groups, and nonprofit organizations, such as the YMCA, to develop new recreation

programs. A particular focus should continue to be on activities for teens not involved with organized sports.

FACILITIES DEFICIENCY

Based on evaluation of available community resources, community input and comparable regional demands for recreation facilities, the following needs have been identified:

Outdoor Recreation

The existing community park facilities are at capacity during peak outdoor recreation periods. Marguerite Maze and Rancho San Justo Sports Facilities are heavily used and lack adequate bathroom facilities during weekend and evening events. Many team sport activities are now programmed at parks too small for sports field play (Las Brisas and McCarthy Parks).

An additional nine (9) parks are proposed for acquisition and/or development over the next 10 years.



PICNIC & PLAYGROUND FACILITIES

Dunne and Calaveras Parks provide group picnic facilities, but as neighborhood parks, they should remain more family oriented. Vista Park Hill has great potential but security and aging facilities are a concern.

Tot play and picnic facilities at neighborhood/school parks should be developed for daytime use by City residents.



Vista Park Hill



Calaveras School Park

COMMUNITY PARKS

In the Community questionnaire there was a clear desire for another larger community park with space for more diverse recreation, as well as passive open space. Christmas Hill Park in Gilroy, was specifically referenced by several individuals. Other individuals, including Task Force members expressed the desire for a major community park that could include an indoor recreation and aquatics facility.

Several large 20 to 30-acre sites are identified as potential park sites within the City.

While Veteran's Memorial Park is a large site, its current control and management is not conducive to a City community park. Future City community facilities may conflict or displace existing needed ballfields. However, the City should continue to coordinate development opportunities for the park.

INDOOR RECREATION & COMMUNITY CENTER

As previously noted, several programs have not expanded due to lack of space. A new indoor recreation facility should include a range of meeting and recreation spaces. The YMCA is currently looking for a site to develop such a facility.

The City should program and budget for the development of a new indoor recreation facility at the proposed Community Park site. A partnership with YMCA for facility management should be considered.



AQUATICS FACILITY

The High School pool is available for City residents and programs for only limited times. Closure of the local County pool has made it more difficult for the City to expand programs.

A City aquatics facility would accommodate expansion of City programs and provide needed variety for youth recreation. Joint development with a community recreation center could enhance revenue generation and maximize operations and management resources.

FACILITY MANAGEMENT / MAINTENANCE

Current park maintenance staff has a wide range of responsibilities including City buildings. Reduced staffing over the years has limited staff capability to weekly or monthly levels of service. Repairs frequently take longer to restore full operation. While safety has been the priority for staff efforts, deferred maintenance is viewed by residents as a "lack of care."

Residents have recognized this reduction of service and expressed a concern about expanding the park system with limited capability for current park facilities.

The City should continue to balance contracted services with expanding maintenance services. Options should be evaluated by the City for cost effective

contracting. Operations and maintenance partnerships such as the school districts or YMCA should be maximized, particularly on new facilities.

Restrooms

The availability and maintenance of restroom facilities, at sites where recreation activities are programmed by the City, should be a priority. The City should evaluate a combination of temporary and permanent facilities to meet community needs. Where neighborhood parks are adjacent to school facilities, establish a policy with the local schools for location and limited use of restrooms by park users.

BMX Bike Facility

Providing Hollister youth with diverse recreation opportunities should be a community priority. A one to 2-acre BMX Bike Track Facility at Veterans Memorial Park, or as an addition to Vista Park Hill are potential locations. The facility may be leased to a nonprofit group or managed by the City.

Off-Leash "Dog Park" Facility

As a benefit to residents with dogs, an off-leash area satisfies the need for a controlled exercise area. A fenced, one-acre enclosure with irrigated turf and walking path could be located at Veterans memorial Park or as an addition to Vista Park Hill.

Equestrian Facility

Hollister' s rural surroundings are attractive to many residents with horses. Equestrian facilities (20–50 acres) could provide opportunities for equestrian events, riding school and stables. An equestrian facility could be a primary feature at a community park located at the edge of Hollister. The City could provide a site and encourage a lease arrangement for private development and management.

Fremont School

The City is considering acquisition of Fremont School to consolidate City departments out of Vista Park Hill. The grass open space should be considered as an open space or plaza for City public events. No active recreation facilities are recommended with Dunne Park nearby.

Financing

Implementation of the Parks Master Plan will require additional funding. Current park impact fees do not cover acquisition of land for larger parks and development. The result is smaller, fewer parks.

An evaluation of other neighboring communities suggests that current park impact fees could be significantly increased.

Recent State Bond and grant funding has increased for recreation projects, particularly with a resource protection component. Land acquisition and development costs could be covered with successful grant applications.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
& NEIGHBORHOOD
REVITALIZATION**

As people move to Hollister and the City grows, City services and facilities become more formalized and individuals have less involvement in planning, developing and caring for their public facilities.

By fostering community involvement through youth groups and neighborhood organizations, Hollister parks can benefit in a variety of ways.

Residents with opportunities to participate in beautification, cleanup and graffiti abatement can ease maintenance staff demands. Ongoing public involvement has also consistently helped reduce vandalism. Hollister successfully used "Operation Pride" in 1995–96, and the program could be restored under Parks & Recreation leadership.